

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



ASIAN AMERICANS  
ADVANCING  
JUSTICE

AAJC

**PROTECTING  
OUR DEMOCRACY**



OUR MISSION IS TO  
ADVANCE CIVIL AND  
HUMAN RIGHTS FOR  
ASIAN AMERICANS AND  
TO BUILD AND PROMOTE  
A FAIR AND EQUITABLE  
SOCIETY FOR ALL

# ▶ A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS

2019 brought vigor to our work as we could feel the winds of change blowing in the right direction even as some storms loomed on the horizon. That change included an increase in Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) voters in 2018, and a record number of new and incumbent Asian Americans and women elected to Congress. Using that energy, Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC created new opportunities, faced down challenges, and lifted our communities at every turn.

We won several important court victories in 2019. Perhaps most importantly, we – as co-counsel with the Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund, and as part of a coordinated network of lawyers in six different cases nationwide – successfully removed the citizenship question from the 2020 Census. By doing so, we eliminated a significant barrier to participation by our community in the census. We also won highly publicized victories in a voting purge case in Texas, and a nationwide injunction stopping the administration from creating economic barriers for legal permanent residents seeking to become citizens.

This year was also critical in preparing for the 2020 decennial census. The census determines the allocation of over \$1.5 trillion in federal spending annually. It affects how roads, schools, and hospitals are funded in our local communities. And it affects how political representation is determined. It is a cornerstone of our democracy. As the national AAPI hub for census resources, Advancing Justice | AAJC has created a podcast, hosted monthly webinars, and has worked with the community to translate fact sheets into 23 Asian and Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander languages. We will do everything in our power to make sure that the AAPI community is visible and counted in 2020.

In addition to ensuring that AAPIs are counted, Advancing Justice | AAJC recognizes that immigration is a critical issue for the AAPI community. Over 90 percent of the AAPI community are immigrants or the children of immigrants; we recognize the importance of an immigration system that values immigrants, reunites families, and recognizes the diversity

of the immigrant experience. Toward that end, we supported the reintroduction of the Reuniting Families Act, legislation that would strengthen, not weaken, the family-based immigration system. We also highlight the story of Asian immigrants through a new publication, *Inside the Numbers: How Immigration Shapes Asian American and Pacific Islander Communities*, which provides a detailed look at immigration through an Asian American lens.

Advancing Justice | AAJC continues to advocate for the community at the intersection of technology and civil rights. The increased use of artificial intelligence, facial recognition, and data sharing presents unique concerns to communities of color. In addition, although technology and social media platforms have given AAPIs a voice that often may be shut out in more mainstream communities, these platforms also present threats to our community with hate speech and misinformation/disinformation.

Change is coming. Whether the winds blow at our backs to give us strength or blow in our face to try to push us back, one thing is clear. Advancing Justice | AAJC will continue to defend and advance our civil and human rights. We will fiercely protect our democracy now and for the future.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John C. Yang'.

**JOHN C. YANG**  
President and Executive Director



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Parkin Lee'.

**PARKIN LEE**  
Chair, Board of Directors

# ► STRENGTHENING ROOTS

## IMMIGRATION AND IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

### PROTECTING OUR IMMIGRANT FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Advancing Justice | AAJC is a leading authority on immigration policy as it affects the Asian American community. As a leader in the Asian American and broader social justice community, we promote fair and just immigration policies that protect family unity, provide access to immigration status and a pathway to citizenship, and promote civil rights protections and due process in enforcement. Our role was particularly crucial in the face of the administration's anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric and policies throughout 2019.

#### FAMILY IMMIGRATION

The family-based immigration system is critical to Asian American communities. Throughout 2019, we continued our leadership role in the Value Our Families Campaign, co-convened by the Advancing Justice affiliation, Church World Service, and NAKASEC, **with a mission of protecting, preserving, and strengthening the family immigration system and promoting an immigration system that is informed by love, empathy, and justice.** We led efforts to build Congressional and public support for an immigration system that protects our current family-based immigration system, including the diversity visa program and refugee and asylum programs, all of which have contributed to strong, vibrant, and diverse American communities.

- **Supported the Reintroduction of the Reuniting Families Act**, by Rep. Judy Chu, a bill that would clear the family and employment visa backlogs, update our family-based immigration laws, lift the family and employment-based visa country caps, provide equality for LGBTQ families, and provide much needed enforcement relief to preserve family unity. Advancing Justice | AAJC led coordinated advocacy to endorse the legislation and help secure over 75 co-sponsors.
- **Opposed Harmful Administrative Changes to Immigration Policy** by continuing to oppose the public charge rule, opposing changes to the naturalization fee waiver application, and opposing changes to the immigration benefits

fee schedule that would substantially raise fees for naturalization and family-based green card applications and eliminate most immigration fee waivers. Our advocacy included submitting administrative comments, educating our partners and the public to encourage their opposition to the policy changes, and successfully litigating to fight back against some of these harmful policies.

#### IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT: SUPPORTING A NEW WAY FORWARD

Advancing Justice | AAJC worked in coalition with our partners to oppose the massive increase in deportations of Southeast Asian refugees with criminal convictions, many of which were minor or decades old. We supported the introduction of a bill by Rep. Chuy Garcia, "the New Way Forward Act," which repeals many of the lesser grounds of deportability involving minor crimes, restores judicial discretion, and reforms immigrant detention. We also continued to work within the Defund Hate coalition to push Congress to block additional enforcement funds for mass deportations and block the transfer of funds from other agencies such as the FEMA and schools for military families for a harmful and wasteful border wall.

#### DACA AND TPS

We continued our support for our partners in efforts to save Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Nepal, as well as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) program both of which



are being terminated by the administration and provide permanent status and citizenship for these populations.

### MUSLIM BAN

Advancing Justice | AAJC continues to stand up for and alongside affected Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian communities in the face of discriminatory policies. Throughout 2019, we have worked with Congressional offices and local and national AAPI organizations to amplify the efforts of the #NoMuslimBanEver campaign and supported legislation to repeal the Muslim Ban, including the No Ban Act.

### NATURALIZATION: SUPPORT FOR ASPIRING NEW AMERICANS

As a member of the New Americans Campaign, we work with many DC area immigration legal service providers to provide naturalization assistance, mainly through low-cost citizenship workshops. At these workshops, trained bilingual volunteers help legal permanent residents to complete the naturalization application.

### IMMIGRATION DEMOGRAPHICS AND POLICY REPORT

In June 2019, Advancing Justice | AAJC published a report entitled *Inside the Numbers: How Immigration Shapes Asian American and Pacific Islander Communities*. This report increased understanding of AAPI immigrant communities and their needs for policymakers, the organizations that serve our communities, and the media. It provides data on the AAPI immigrant population, detailing its size, growth, and diversity, including data on key socioeconomic characteristics. The report covers the diverse immigration pathways of

AAPIs. The report includes discussion of many of the issues confronting AAPI communities: visa backlogs in family and employment-based immigration, the lack of a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, the rescission of DACA and TPS, the Muslim and refugee bans, escalation of immigration enforcement, and attacks on naturalization. Members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus spoke at the launch of the report, and Advancing Justice | AAJC staff and community partners spoke at a congressional briefing in conjunction with the launch.

TOP: Our report in collaboration with Asian Americans Advancing Justice — Los Angeles, “*Inside the Numbers: How Immigration Shapes Asian American and Pacific Islanders*,” goes in depth on the community’s demographics, including pathways to citizenship and policy recommendations to improve the immigration system.

BOTTOM: Marita Etcubanez, Advancing Justice — AAJC’s Director of Strategic Initiatives, speaking at the launch of the immigration report and assisting during a naturalization clinic.



# STRENGTHENING ROOTS

## CENSUS



### FIGHTING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES TO BE COUNTED

Advancing Justice | AAJC works to address barriers that have historically resulted in the undercounting and underreporting of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) in federal data collection and analysis efforts. An accurate count of our community in the census is essential for government services to be provided to our people, for decisionmakers to understand the community's importance, and for the enforcement of AAPIs' civil rights. As co-chair of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights' Census Task Force, we emphasize the need for a fully funded Census Bureau and for smart, effective, and well-tested policy decisions to interested stakeholders, administration officials, and legislators. Through this work, we advocate for inclusive federal data collection efforts to safeguard the Census — our most valuable source of nuanced community demographic data. Additionally, as the ramp up year to the 2020 Census, we created a resource hub for the AAPI community and continued to provide trainings and other resources to partners on the ground in preparation for their Get Out The Count (GOTC) efforts in 2020.

### CITIZENSHIP QUESTION

When the U.S. Department of Commerce announced its decision to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census, we knew that the introduction of this untested question would create fear among all immigrants and would result in an undercount of vulnerable populations. We worked extensively to address the fallout from the administration's attempt to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census, including filing a lawsuit challenging the administration's actions while concurrently coordinating messaging strategy to combat the chilling effect on our communities. Of the multiple lawsuits filed on this issue, ours was the only one that focused on the Asian, Latino, and Native American communities, with plaintiffs who come from these communities.

**In April 2019, the trial court ruled in our favor, finding that Secretary Ross and Department of Commerce violated the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and the Enumerations Clause of the U.S. Constitution.**

As part of a coordinated group of six cases, the Supreme Court ruled in June 2019 that the Commerce wrongfully attempted to add the citizenship question to the 2020 census. Although the administration sought to find a way to circumvent the Supreme Court's decision, discovery obtained in our case regarding the potentially political and discriminatory intent behind the question forced the government finally to concede.

**On July 17, 2019, the trial court in our case granted a permanent injunction keeping the citizenship question off the 2020 Census form.**

### 2020 CENSUS GET OUT THE COUNT (GOTC)

As the national hub for the AAPI community, Advancing Justice | AAJC launched our new census website ([CountUsIn2020.org](https://CountUsIn2020.org)) in conjunction with the Advancing Justice affiliates. The website houses all our census resources, including factsheets, PSAs, webinars, blogs, our census podcast, partner resources, and census news updates. It also has a census social media feed and census events calendar. Importantly, the resource hub provides factsheets in 23 AAPI languages. This website continues to be updated as field operations for the Census Bureau changes, and has become the best resource in the country for anyone working on 2020 census issues related to the AAPI community.



# ▶ STRENGTHENING ROOTS

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS, TECHNOLOGY, AND MEDIA

### PROTECTING OUR DIGITAL PRIVACY AND LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The fast-paced proliferation of technology has left many in our community vulnerable to having their personal data exposed and shared without their awareness or consent. Given the real world implications of having one's data exposed in the digital space, we see privacy as both a human and civil right. In a digital society, that right extends to personal data collection and information sharing which creates an individualized digital footprint of each American. In addition, we have opposed the invasive digital surveillance of our communities, calling for limitations on the deployment of facial recognition technology and opposing the use of social media surveillance to monitor community members. Advancing Justice | AAJC has worked to ensure that the Asian American voice is heard in the debate over what privacy means for our communities in the digital space.

We have also worked to bridge the digital divide, which adversely affects low-income community members who cannot afford to have high-quality internet service. **We believe that in the digital age, everyone should be able to use the internet to find job opportunities, complete their homework, access critical emergency services, and more.** Furthermore, Advancing Justice | AAJC produced numerous community education resources to empower our community partners with information

on the implications of technology policies and products. In addition to publishing numerous policy backgrounders and blog posts, we hosted live webinar events and a digital week of action.

This past year, Advancing Justice | AAJC maintained robust government engagement at all levels and played a leadership role in multiple civil rights coalitions that focus on these issues. We testified before Congress on diversity in the technology industry. We engaged with congressional offices on key issues of digital privacy, the digital divide, and more. To strengthen Asian American advocacy on these issues, we led efforts with our Asian American Technology and Telecommunications Table to broaden the coalition and uplift Asian American organizations committed to having their voices heard in this discussion. Additionally, Advancing Justice | AAJC submitted multiple comments to the Federal Elections Commission, Federal Trade Commission, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, and Federal Communications Commission to present the impact of proposed rulemaking on Asian American communities. We educated Congress and the public on pertinent telecommunications and technology issues and served as a resource for analysis regarding the impact of telecommunications and technology policy on our communities.

### MEDIA REPRESENTATION: OUR REPRESENTATION MATTERS

Advancing Justice | AAJC continues the fight to ensure that diversity in media reflects the world around us. From being a leader in the Asian Pacific American Media Coalition to calling out negative portrayals of Asian Americans on television, we continued to ensure that the images meant to reflect our communities were accurate, thoughtful, and relevant. Also, Advancing Justice | AAJC firmly believes that diverse media ownership ensures that various constituencies are served. As such, we consistently opposed efforts by the FCC to relax media ownership rules without conducting studies to analyze the impact of such a change on ownership by people of color.



# PROMOTING EQUAL PROTECTION

## LEGAL ADVOCACY

### ENSURING LEGAL PROTECTIONS FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

Through our legal advocacy program, Advancing Justice | AAJC uses the courts to protect our communities. We pursue impact litigation in federal courts, file amicus briefs, including in cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, and engage with the broader racial and social justice coalition to advance key issues creatively.

#### IMPACT LITIGATION

Throughout 2019, Advancing Justice | AAJC investigated cases and pursued impact litigation in federal courts, as well as engaged with civil rights partners on strategies for participation in existing litigation. Importantly, Advancing Justice | AAJC secured three significant and nationally publicized victories for the community on issues involving census, voting rights, and immigration.

- **LUPE v. Ross (D. Md. and 4th Cir.) (LUPE I)**  
Advancing Justice | AAJC, together with MALDEF, won a significant legal victory in successfully challenging the administration's attempted addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 decennial census. We filed a lawsuit in May 2018 alleging that the administration's addition of a citizenship question violated Constitutional and federal law and would lead to a severe undercount of Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, immigrants, and other populations, depriving these communities of political representation and federal funding.

In April 2019, the trial court found in our favor, ruling that the U.S. Department of Commerce violated the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and the Enumerations Clause of the Constitution.

However, the court found insufficient evidence for the racial animus and conspiracy claims. The government appealed their loss and we cross-appealed the racial animus claim. Concurrently, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in April in a related case from New York (one of the six census citizenship cases), and on June 24, 2019, ruled that the addition of the citizenship question was a violation of the APA. In our case, on appeal, the Fourth Circuit and the district court agreed, after reviewing new evidence from a deceased Republican operative's personal storage devices

(discovered in an unrelated case), that substantial issues were raised regarding the racial animus claim and remanded the case to the District Court for additional discovery. In July 2019, after flip-flopping on the issue before the court in our case, the administration announced it would no longer seek to include the citizenship question on the 2020 Census form and the court granted a permanent injunction on July 17, 2019, **keeping the citizenship question off the 2020 Census.**

- **Garibay v. Whitley (W.D. Tex.)** Advancing Justice | AAJC, with co-counsel MALDEF and AALDEF, **successfully challenged the Texas Secretary of State's move to purge over 90,000 registered voters from its voter rolls** based on a flawed practice that identified naturalized citizens as potential non-citizens. As 25% of the immigrants naturalized in Texas were from the Asian countries, Asian Americans would have been disproportionately impacted by the Texas Secretary of State's actions. The settlement agreement, reached on April 26, 2019, rescinded the flawed and included a requirement that all related notices be sent in languages covered by Section 203 in Texas.



- **City of Seattle v. Department of Homeland Security (N.D. Cal.)** Advancing Justice | AAJC, with co-counsel from Protect Democracy and pro bono counsel Mayer Brown, **won a nationwide preliminary injunction barring USCIS from implementing changes to the naturalization application process that would have made it harder for low-income immigrants to obtain fee waivers for naturalization applications.** Arguing that the new rule was arbitrary and capricious under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and violated the Federal Vacancies Reform Act (FVRA), Advancing Justice | AAJC also demonstrated the harm that the community would face if the rule was allowed to take effect. On December 9, 2019, the court granted a nationwide preliminary injunction that prohibited the rule from going into effect anywhere in the country.
- **LUPE v. Ross (D. Md.) (LUPE II)** On September 13, 2019, Advancing Justice | AAJC and MALDEF filed a lawsuit challenging the Trump administration's plan to collect and provide incomplete citizenship data to the states for purposes of redistricting as an unconstitutional and racially discriminatory scheme intended to deprive Latinos and non-citizens of equal representation. The lawsuit names Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and U.S. Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham as defendants, and states they continued to conspire to collect and include citizenship data for redistricting purposes after courts blocked the addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 Census. As of the writing of this report, the case was pending.

#### AMICUS BRIEFS

Advancing Justice | AAJC led amicus brief efforts in the United States Supreme Court and other federal courts on key issues including immigration, voting rights, and access to technology.

- **Metro PCS v. Picker (9th Cir.)** Advancing Justice | AAJC filed an amicus brief to the Ninth Circuit in support of improved broadband internet access for communities of color and low-income

communities impacted by the digital divide. The brief highlighted the importance of affordable broadband internet access for the educational and economic prospects of low-income communities of color.

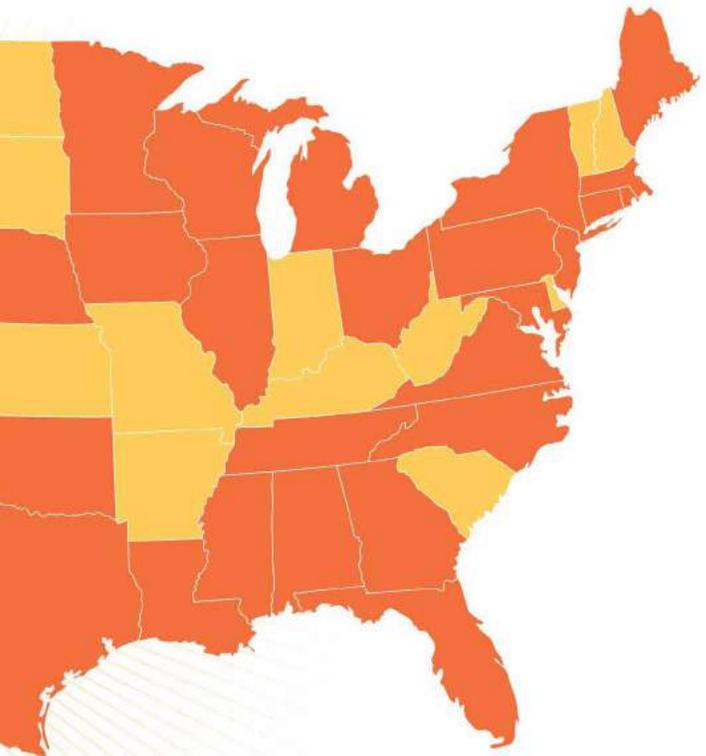
- **Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (M.D. N.C.)** Advancing Justice | AAJC, along with our affiliates, submitted a brief in support of the University of North Carolina's (UNC) holistic admissions practice, which can consider race as part of an individual applicant's overall application.
- **Public Charge Cases (Multiple Cases)** Advancing Justice | AAJC with AALDEF, the National Women's Law Center, and pro bono firm Crowell Moring led amicus briefs for multiple cases challenging the new public charge rule. We filed briefs in four cases at the preliminary injunction stage in the Northern District of California and the Southern District of New York. Over sixty organizations joined this brief.



TOP: Legal advocacy staff Terry Ao Minnis and Niyati Shah speak to reporters outside of the U.S. Supreme Court in April 2019 following oral arguments regarding the citizenship question in the 2020 Census.



# OUR VISIBILITY ◀



Ellee Pai Hong, host of Comcast Newsmakers, interviews Senior Director of Census and Voting Programs Terry Ao Minnis about the necessity of the census and the importance of outreach for Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

## MEDIA

### OUR VISIBILITY/REACH

- ▶ **2,300+** media placements
- ▶ NBC Asian America, HuffPost, NPR, New York Times, Business Insider, News Week, Variety, CNN
- ▶ Launched Count on Your Census Podcast

## SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

🐦 TWITTER

▶ **14.2K**  
followers

▶ **2.4M**  
impressions

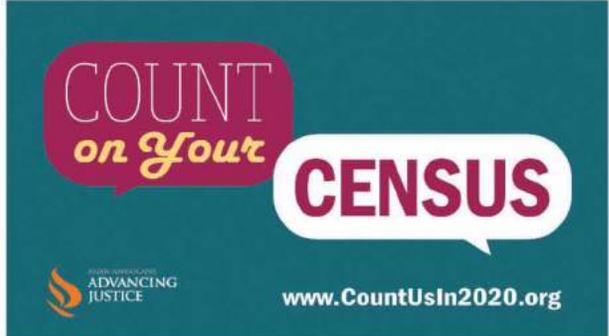
🌐 WEBSITE

▶ **172K**  
page visits

📘 FACEBOOK

▶ **10.5K**  
followers

▶ **96K**  
reached from  
most popular  
post



# PROMOTING EQUAL PROTECTION

## ANTI-HATE INITIATIVE AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

### DOCUMENTING HATE INCIDENTS

With hate on the rise, Advancing Justice | AAJC continues to document hate crimes and other incidents of hate committed against our Asian American and immigrant communities. **We lift up such incidents to media and policymakers in order to shed light on the breadth of incidents targeting our communities and immigrants across the country,** and work to connect individuals targeted by hate with resources, including legal assistance.

Through the Advancing Justice affiliation's multilingual Stand Against Hatred website ([standagainsthared.org](http://standagainsthared.org)), which is accessible in Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese, we track and report on hate crimes and hate incidents against AAPIs. We have received hundreds of reports from across the country since the website's launch in 2017. These include reports of anti-Asian, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant incidents that run the gamut of hateful slurs, bullying, harassment, intimidation, and violence.

We are a partner in the diverse Communities Against Hate coalition, led by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. We contributed to "Hate Magnified," a report published by Communities Against Hate and the Leadership Conference Education Fund in January 2019, which noted that two-thirds of those polled felt that "incidents or expressions of hate are getting worse across our country." **Another key finding from the report is that nearly 40% of the incidents reported to Communities Against Hate invoked the name of an alt-right hate group or Trump and Trump-related rhetoric.**

Through the Communities Against Hate coalition, we continue to work with the Lawyer's Committee to support its Stop Hate project, including its 1-844-9-NO-HATE hotline, to make assistance available in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and other Asian languages.

### LIFTING UP OUR COMMUNITIES' VOICES

Advancing Justice | AAJC has long supported affirmative action policies. Working with our Advancing Justice affiliates over the years, we filed briefs in the *Grutter* and *Gratz* cases in support of affirmative action at the University of Michigan, and in the *Fisher* cases supporting affirmative action at the University of Texas.

We continued to work to educate our community about affirmative action and race-conscious admissions policies, particularly in connection with a legal challenge to Harvard's affirmative action policies.

**In October, a federal judge ruled that there was no intentional discrimination against Asian American students and upheld Harvard University's race-conscious admissions policy.**

We held briefings with AAPI community leaders, civil rights leaders, and members of Congress to address the district court ruling, especially to counter the efforts of affirmative action opponents to frame Asian Americans as a wedge group amongst communities of color.



Our Stand Against Hatred tracker documents hate and aims to educate about the environment of hate around the country.



# ► BUILDING POLITICAL POWER

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



### ENGAGING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO PROTECT AND ADVANCE THE RIGHTS OF ASIAN AMERICANS

#### COMMUNITY PARTNERS NETWORK

Established in 1995, the Community Partners Network has accumulated more than 20 years of experience in coalition-building as well as providing training and technical assistance to local groups on advocacy and community education efforts.

**With over 160 community-based organizations and local allies in 33 states and Washington, DC, we work closely with members of the network to develop regional and local capacity to elevate community voices across the nation.**

In turn, the network provides us first-hand information about the issues facing our diverse community.

Throughout the year, our Community Partners engagements include in-person trainings, digital trainings, social media campaigns, action alerts, advocacy mobilizations, and more. We use these opportunities to share knowledge and resources and strengthen the advocacy skills and strengthen the advocacy infrastructure of community-based organizations. These engagements increase active participation of state and local leaders in national advocacy campaigns.

Throughout the year, we have mobilized our Community Partners around advocacy campaigns, in-person and digital actions, and community education opportunities. With the 2020 Census approaching, we ramped up our *Count Us In 2020* Get Out the Count (GOTC) campaign focused on ensuring a full and accurate count of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities. We worked in partnership with Community Partners and a growing network of Census Partners to develop and refine community education materials including a GOTC toolkit, 12 GOTC factsheets with customizable templates, a monthly census webinar series with 10 webinars in 2019, and more.

Our Community Partners played an integral role in the development of our translated factsheets in 15 Asian languages.

#### YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Advancing Justice | AAJC's Youth Leadership Summit is a three-day leadership development program for college students. The summit provides a unique opportunity for young advocates from across the country to gain hands-on experience from interactive workshops and activities with policy advocates and legislative staff of Members of Congress on Capitol Hill. **In 2019, Advancing Justice | AAJC provided scholarships for 20 students to come to Washington, DC.** Following the summit, we awarded five stipends to alumni to support campus-based projects that elevate AAPI stories and experiences and advance dialogue, advocacy, and civic engagement within our communities. These projects will be implemented at campuses and local communities in California, Georgia, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

Outside of our youth engagement with the Youth Leadership Summit, we worked with Georgetown University's first *Intro to Asian American Studies* class on community education and advocacy campaigns around the family-based immigration system, rescission of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, the public charge rule, the Muslim and Refugee Bans, Southeast Asian detention and deportation, and attacks against affirmative action. These projects took place in the spring 2019 semester.





# BUILDING POLITICAL POWER

## VOTING RIGHTS

### PROTECTING VOTING POWER AND EQUAL ACCESS TO THE BALLOT BOX FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

As a nationally recognized expert on voting rights, Advancing Justice | AAJC works to increase access for Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) to voting by eliminating barriers to participation and promoting policies that increase access. **We promote compliance with voting rights laws and increased access to the ballot, fight voter intimidation and suppression, produce reports on voting rights issues, and conduct voter surveys to increase understanding about the voting behavior of our community.**

We also litigate and file amicus briefs on voting rights to ensure Asian American and other disenfranchised communities' needs are addressed. With increased efforts by this administration and state-level officials to disenfranchise and further suppress the votes of immigrants and voters in communities of color, our continued work to fight for our communities' access to the ballot box is more urgent than ever.

### CONGRESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

From our engagement as one of the key civil rights organizations in reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act in 2006 to our leadership in helping to develop the legislative response to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to strike down the coverage formula to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act in *Shelby County v. Holder*, Advancing Justice | AAJC has been at the forefront in fighting for a strong Voting Rights Act and combating voting discrimination against voters of color. As the 116th Congress works to restore the Voting Rights Act and provide a legislative fix to the *Shelby* decision, Advancing Justice | AAJC has engaged with congressional offices and coalition partners on the best strategy to approach a legislative fix, including ensuring the inclusion of a new and robust provision creating supplemental preclearance coverage for known practices that have been used to suppress the voting power of emerging communities of color. Advancing Justice | AAJC, in partnership with MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) and the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund published a report, *Practice-Based Preclearance: Protecting Against Tactics Persistently Used to Silence Minority Communities' Votes*, in support of the new provision.

Advancing Justice | AAJC was the lead Asian American organization in the coalition of national civil rights organizations that successfully advocated for the passage in the House of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act, on December 6, 2019. Over the course of this year, Advancing Justice | AAJC had worked closely with congressional leaders

and committee staff, national advocates, and AAPI community partners across the nation to ensure the AAPI communities' voice was heard. As part of our congressional engagement, Advancing Justice | AAJC's President and Executive Director John Yang testified before the House Judiciary Committee, highlighting the importance of strengthening Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act to protect the Asian American electorate. He also testified before the Committee on House Administration, discussing the importance of language access and assistance provisions of the Voting Rights Act for Asian Americans in breaking down language barriers to the ballot.

### LEGAL ADVOCACY

Advancing Justice | AAJC also used litigation as a tool to protect the voting rights of Asian Americans. In addition to our success in the Texas voter purge cases (described in the Legal Advocacy section of this Report), we worked closely with local partners to enforce Illinois' Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) Statute and seek compliance with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), leading to the filing of a lawsuit in early 2020 by Advancing Justice | AAJC, with local counsels Chicago Lawyers Committee and pro bono counsel Skadden, on behalf of local civic engagement organizations, including our affiliate, Advancing Justice | Chicago, alleging violations of the NVRA, Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, and the AVR statute.



# ▶ BUILDING POLITICAL POWER

## ADVANCING JUSTICE CONFERENCE

### ROADMAP TO 2020 AND BEYOND

The Advancing Justice Conference is the first and only national conference in the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community focusing on civil rights and social justice. Community leaders from across the U.S. come together to address issues facing one of our fastest growing populations.

**It serves as a unique forum where stakeholders can learn from issue area experts and community leaders, discuss common challenges and opportunities, share best practices and find more effective ways to work collaboratively.**

Conference attendees participate in panel discussions, caucus sessions, skills and capacity building trainings, and networking receptions.

Advancing Justice — Atlanta hosted the conference in 2019, bringing together nearly 12,000 community leaders from across the country for three days of programming in March. Under the theme “Roadmap to 2020 and Beyond,” the conference programming offered over 40 sessions to educate and inspire our community leaders to tackle challenges ranging from obstacles to participation in the 2020 Census and the importance of data disaggregation to deportations of our community members. The keynote address was delivered by Stacey Abrams, former Georgia gubernatorial candidate.

In addition, the conference included a Georgia Day of Action, where out-of-town conference attendees participated in a rally outside the capitol as local leaders met with their elected representatives to advocate for legislation that would give all Georgia residents access to driver’s licenses.

LEFT: Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC staff at the 2019 Asian Americans Advancing Justice Conference in Atlanta, “Roadmap to 2020 and Beyond,” lead workshops designed to motivate Asian American and Pacific Islanders to advocate for their communities.

RIGHT: Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC President and Executive Director John C. Yang poses with fellow census panelists Wallace H. Coulter Foundation President and CEO Sue Van, Consultant to the Redistricting Project of the New Venture Fund and Bauman Foundation Karen Narasaki, National Urban Indian Family Coalition Executive Director Janeen Comenote, APIAVote Executive Director Christine Chen, TDW+Co Founder and Principal Tim Wang, Nielsen VP, Strategic Community Alliances Mariko Carpenter, and founder of Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles Stewart Kwoh, on the importance of a fair and accurate count.

BOTTOM: Asian Americans Advancing Justice — Chicago Executive Director Andy Kang, Asian Americans Advancing Justice — Los Angeles founding President and Executive Director Stewart Kwoh, Asian Americans Advancing Justice — Asian Law Caucus Executive Director Aarti Kohli, New Virginia Majority Co-Executive Director Tram Nguyen, Asian Americans Advancing Justice — Atlanta Executive Director Stephanie Cho, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC President and Executive Director John C. Yang pose with former Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams following her keynote at the 2019 Advancing Justice Conference.



# ▶ AMERICAN COURAGE AWARDS

The American Courage Awards is an annual event hosted by Advancing Justice | AAJC, honoring individuals, groups, and corporations in recognition of their extraordinary courage or commitment to the cause of AAPI civil and human rights.

In 2019, the current political climate forced us to dig deep and muster courage to fight constant threats to the Asian American community.

The 2019 American Courage Awards was proud to salute **Karen Narasaki**, a pioneer who grew Advancing Justice | AAJC into the powerhouse that it is today. That legacy extends to her taking existing organizations to the next and making them into formidable bulwarks on which the community can rely.

Speaking up for the civil rights of Asian Americans courses through the bloodline of President's Award honoree, **Karen Korematsu**. She is an undeniable icon in the community and carries on the legacy of her late father, Fred T. Korematsu, reminding people of the racial profiling that has occurred in U.S. history. **Paul Lee**, past chair of Advancing Justice | AAJC Board of Directors, is a forever champion for our organization and within the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. As a President's Award honoree, we recognized Paul for his efforts to bring about diversity within the legal arena. Finally, we honor this year's Changemakers.

The **Harvard Student Advocates** whose work has altered the fabric of the affirmative action lawsuit. From their testimony in the case to their interviews in the media, these students have illustrated how Asian Americans benefit from affirmative action and why we must care about this fight.



TOP: 2019 Honorees (left to right): Paul Lee, Karen Korematsu, Karen Narasaki, Sally Chen, and Jang Lee

MIDDLE: Board member Kenzo Kawanabe addresses American Courage Awards crowd

BOTTOM: The Honorable Norman Y. Mineta presents President's Award



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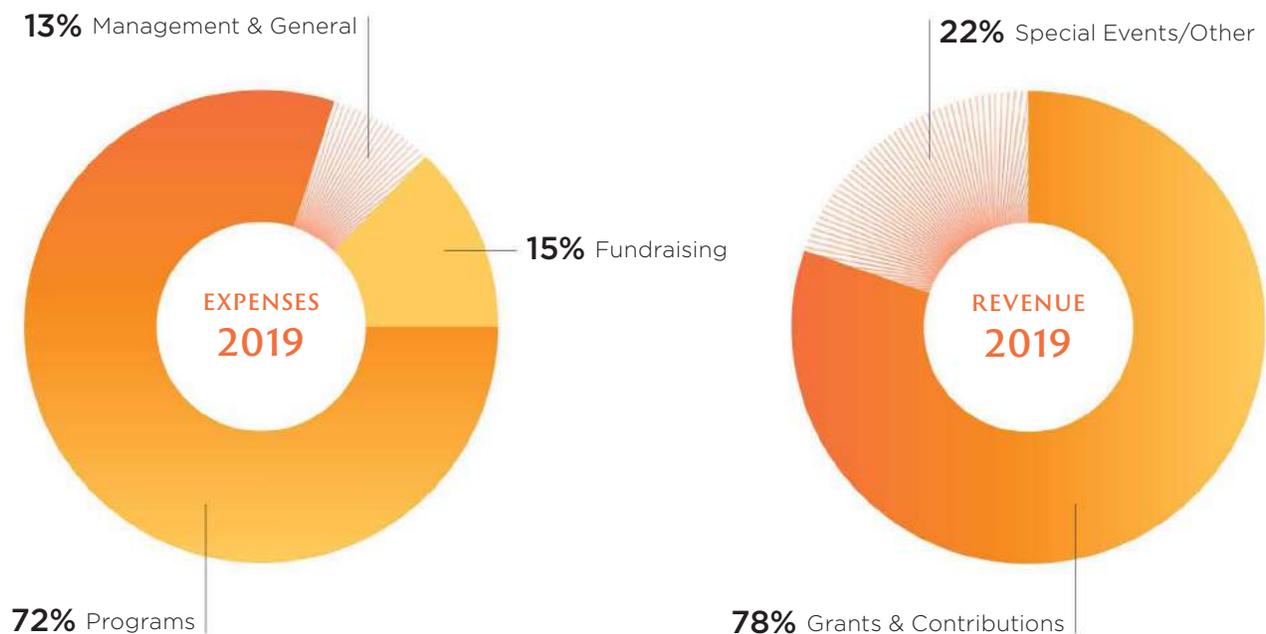
"We support Advancing Justice AAJC because whether a voice for community representation via voting rights and census, advocating for equal rights, or standing against discrimination and hatred, AAJC is a beacon for the Asian American community. In collaboration with the Advancing Justice affiliates and other civil rights/social justice groups, AAJC is reinforcing the American fabric in pursuit of a fair and equitable society for all."

Jeffrey Hsi & Amy Wagenfeld, Donors

"I support AAJC cause it is the most effective national voice protecting the civil rights of Asian Americans, whether on immigrant rights, accurate census count, hate crimes, racism or xenophobia. With affiliates in LA, SF, Chicago and Atlanta and a network of community based organizations, AAJC's Washington DC presence is more important than ever in the current political climate. I am proud to support AAJC because it has made life better for me and the Asian American community."

Paul W. Lee, Donor

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Cash and cash equivalents	2,267,991	1,596,725
Investments	1,081,493	1,137,205
Grants and pledges receivable	2,666,224	3,101,987
Prepaid expenses and deposits	77,185	77,061
Furniture and equipment, net	17,082	19,969
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>6,109,975</b>	<b>5,932,947</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	195,799	175,944
Deferred rent	301,689	312,843
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>497,488</b>	<b>488,787</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Without donor restrictions	1,209,155	872,898
With donor restrictions	4,403,332	4,571,262
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>5,612,487</b>	<b>5,444,160</b>
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